1970â??S â?? THE YEARS OF INNOCENCE.

Description

After my parents especially my father, I reckon my school days account for the most memorable and transformational phase. I have saved spectacular memories of the 70â??s during which I passed my SSC, board exams with only one mark extra to qualify as a first class pass. I hardly remember anyone cared to shake my hand or parting a smile upon my achievement. Marks and ranks were never a measure of any worthwhile fanfare in those days. Parents were happy with the marks we got and what we were as children â?? all the time decent and obedient.

I donâ??t exactly remember who accompanied me when I was admitted into nursery class at Nirmala High School, I was four years then. It was in 1964, my father wasnâ??t with me at that time, and he was to return to his native place Vijayawada, four years later from the USA after completing his doctoral research.

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The school was hardly twenty minutesâ?? walk from my home. The narrow path leading to the school was shoddily lined by a long row of thatch-roofed and soot coloured hutments on one side and a broad water channel flowing all along the school boundary wall and few meters down merging with the main water canal: a major water source to hundreds of acres of paddy fields spread beyond the school and our home.

After returning from the school, once upgraded to the primary class, promptly after four, the homework sessions, scrutinizing the notes and the completed chapters were supervised by my dad. I would sit cross-legged squatting on a neatly spread mat on the floor. Bending my whole back like a twig â?? to read or to write out anything. An old incandescent bulb floating carelessly by a free hanging wire: a source of the faint yellowish-orange glow was what we could afford for night study.

Nirmala High School is a missionary outfit; with its well-layed playgrounds, bright and bustling classrooms combined with its merciful surroundings. I greatly got attached to their charitable outlook and the righteous zeal of many sisters who have taken positions as teachers for various subjects over twelve years of my study in the school. I was awed by their application of ethics and values, and passion with which they would engage our prismatic bunch of co-edsâ??; and, young-at hearts class of 76. To learn, read, and write. I found their devotedness always truly white and bright, as the habits, they wore to the classes. With deeply strewn interactive memories, forty-five years later, my reverence and respect for them still continue renewed and well preserved.

In the long corridors, well-stocked library, our weekly singing classes, drawing, and craft classes all designed well and planned into our liberal curriculum; I obediently memorized the lessons, completed my assignments and learned my first lessons of discipline from our Headmistress Sr. Angelica Fernandez, now settled in Hong Kong.

Sr.Nancy, who was our class-teacher for more than eight years, an ever-smiling, kind-hearted and a genteel soul; taught me two moral codes for living. One the value of friendship, and the other how to respect and treat â?? the girlsâ?? as equals â?? around twenty in the group then as our classmates.

Run, jump, and hop until your shirt drips with sweat. Table-Tennis, badminton, basketball, mass-drill, periodic outdoor sports events; my schools days were affluent with sporting and leisure activities big and small. Sr.Mercy John was our Physical education in-charge who fastened our minds, bodies, and souls wholesomely to a strong and spirited orbit. A thoughtful vision she had had, for all of us, as a coach, forty-five years ago.

What I outstandingly wish to highlight is how transformational it had been the reverential sistersâ?? involvement gifting us a lifetime of well-being â?? both physical and emotional. With their simple lifestyles, teaching patiently, reflecting for all of us, who were their pet pupils; how to live and lead well? The structural and functionality of entire school worked in tandem to see that we would all elevate to the loftiness where most of the alumnus find today.

I never imagined pop-music would be easy on my ears, until my maths teacher Mrs.Prema Raghavan, has brought to the school, a soon to be a rage, a cassette tape-recorder. My eyes, innocent by thirteen years, couldnâ??t take off from that â??a big book sizeâ?? music playing gadget. She pressed the play button on the machine for me to listen to an English racy melody. Later I came to know the song was titled, â??Mama-Miaâ?? sung by a Swedish group introduced to the western pop music lovers as â??ABBAâ?? in 1974. Since then I got launched into enjoying the melodious world of pop music. Even today Abba songs, their lyrics and the floating melody provide me calming ambrosia when my moods turn dark and down!

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At the times my home environs were too naive and primitive if I recollect rightly. All in all, around four uncles and aunts and double the number of cousins of assorted age groups from four-year-olds to college going siblings were put up in our ancestral home. It is impossible to even make a wild guess, today, how the minimum conveniences like one small restroom and equally small room for bathing were attacked by so many members every day without tension and ruckus. No gas appliances and no grinders, no telephone. Cooking was on kerosene stoves, and wood and coal were at times used when kerosene was rationed. Living on the first floor my routine chores were more laborious than my cousins living downstairs.

Every morning my early routine included to draw water from a small well situated at the far corner of the house, enough bucketsful sufficient for a day and carry it all the way, walking all around the house to four feet by four feet storage place did crudely with red bricks. To the first floor. No electric motors or tap connections to help me out in those days.

Entertainment and recreation were unheard terms, with no television, or radio. Social and political awareness was never a point of discussion. I had never known or ever visited a movie theatre or had the pleasure of enjoying a movie until I was sixteen. It was a three paisa I was to be content with, as a bribe, to stay all by myself, no tantrums when my parents decided to have an outing. Three paise, for young ones, encouragingly, had enough buying scope â?? five decades ago!

Shiny, loose, variegated marbles slipped into both my pockets of the shorts clinking and chinking as I ran down to play, noticing that my dad hasnâ??t come home yet, on the dirt and gravel street, along with neighborhood kids. We used to play with marbles, hunched on the dusty ground until our hands are crusted with dirt and mud. Playing till dusk, one eye on the far end of the street, if I could catch glimpse of my dad cycling down. If he were spotted, hurriedly I would run, â??to wash clean before he discovers how badly Iâ??m being â??undisciplinedâ??. The reckless boon I carried myself off in the nostalgic past â?? a far cry that any present-day kids would be able to fathom how primitive and

restrictive yet gloriously enjoyable and instructionally bursting ways my childhood had been.

If I measure my fifty years of the remarkable ride, I feel Iâ??m blessed that I have pulled together volumes of good fortune and bad luck; bounties, and brickbats; gains, and failures; and success, and negligence. But I have to be grateful for few charms that sailed along with me, from my school days; fastened to me like miraculous lifesaving shock absorbers: good friends, books, discipline and an ear for lovely music; what I find in my daily rejuvenating toolkit.

Category

1. Uncategorized

Date Created
2017/12/09
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